KFJC

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Tex & the Horseheads

As close as you're ever likely to get to seeing the original Stooges, when they're in top form, Tex and the Horseheads, like their big brothers the Cramps & the Gun Club, represent everything that's right about American rock n' roll. Fusing blues and country roots with the primal energy of the best garage bands of the 60s, they turn out a sound that keeps all the promises the Stones broke in the 70s and look to be one of the most potent bands of the 80s. Fronted by lead singer Texacala Jones (a female fire spirit in the tradition of Janis Joplin with an uninhibited stage persona reminiscent of Iggy in his prime), and driven by the powerful guitar stylings of Mike Martt, Tex and the Horseheads leave no corner of the club unscathed.

When the band appears ready to lose control, Texacala sloshing one of her countless beers into the audience or crawling across the stage, things are held together by the combined rhythm section of Smog Vomit's driving bass and the percussion of Robert Williams.

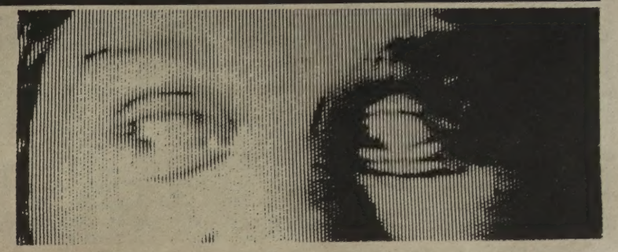
To date, Tex and the Horseheads appearances on vinyl have included a rock magazine flexi-disc (with co-founder Jeffrey Lee Pierce of Gun Club fame), three tracks on the "Hell Comes to Your House Vol. II" compilation, and their self-titled debut mini-lp on Enigma. But as good as they are on record, this is a band that has to be experienced live to be fully appreciated. Devoting most of their time to clubs in their home base of Los Angeles, Tex and the Horseheads are a must-see band when they appear in the Bay Area.

—Clay Holden

Photos by Clay Holden

waves

KFJC



STAFF

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Chief Engineer . . . . . Ken Forsyth
Special Projects Engineer . . . . . Marty Preece
Program Director . . . . . Bob McGlynn
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Traffic Director . . . . . Bill Christman
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KFJC welcomes listener response. Any comments, suggestions, correspondence or advice should be sent to:

KFJC
Foothill Community College
12345 El Monte Road
Los Altos Hills, CA 94022

Our business telephone number is 415/960-4260. Our request line is 415/941-2500.

KFJC is a non-commercial radio station licensed to the Foothill/De Anza Board of Trustees and operated by the students of Foothill Community College. KFJC broadcasts to the entire Metropolitan Bay Area with 250 watts of power, at 89.7 on the FM dial. Our studios are located on the Foothill College Campus.

WAVES
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GM STATEMENT

Welcome to the Spring 1985 issue of WAVES! In case you haven't heard, Oct. 20, 1984 marked our 25th Anniversary. We will continue celebrating this event all year long. Look forward to the many special events and programs we have planned.

What's so special about 25 years, you ask. Plenty!

KFJC–FM has been a student operated radio station since its inception, Oct. 20, 1959. This is not a slick commercial operation backed by corporate know-how and three piece suited account executives bringing in mega-buck ad sales. No, we have always been an independent learn-as-you-go, trial and error (many errors), scrape and scratch for every bit of progress you make radio station. I think that we answer to our community, our listeners and ourselves – not to an overpaid consultant from L.A.!!!!

And we have come a long way. It hasn't been easy, but it has been worthwhile. KFJC is the kind of place that runs on inspiration, the kind of energy that is produced from the creativity that bounces off the walls and an unfathomable dedication and loyalty from its members. That is something to celebrate!

Our anniversary began with the unveiling of our newly renovated studios and expanded facility: more than $40,000 worth of desperately needed upgrading and some new equipment, thanks to your generous donations and matching funds from Foothill College. We have, however, only begun to do all that we need to achieve even a modest semblance of modernization.

So far we have had a few Open House days and we have several more planned before the end of the year. Next time you come up to visit us, we'll show you the improvements we've made so far and the current projects underway as well as the future goals we have planned. We'll also give you the VIP tour of the station and a day to meet our staff. We consider you an integral part of KFJC, so we want to afford you every opportunity to become familiar with your community radio station. Through your letters and comments, we determine the airsound and diversity of programs offered. Your ongoing feedback keeps us on our toes and constantly reminds and informs us of how we may better serve your needs and interests.

Foothill College has been very good to us recently, but they are limited in the long run to funding our day-to-day operations (need I mention your decisions or *indecision* in recent elections and on certain propositions!!). Now – future improvements and even simple maintenance depend greatly on your direct support. Here I mean FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

Still, we wanted to make it easier on you and avoid compromising the quality of our programming, so instead of staging another massive on-the-air fundraiser, we thought that you would appreciate a different approach. A more colorful approach to soliciting your donations seemed to fit in quite nicely with the idea of a silver anniversary celebration. Enter KFJC's 25th Anniversary Commemorative Memorabilia, created to encourage not only your donations, but your participation in our big QC birthday party. KFJC paraphenalia can be yours for as little as a quarter (every penny counts) and that should make it easy for everyone to get involved.

Addendum: thanks for your support at the KFJC Record Swap/Look forward to the Month of Mayhem/Hope you enjoyed April 1st/Welcome IBS delegates (more on that later)/And please, keep in touch, write to us, tell you what you like and what you don't like about us; address correspondence to: I LISTEN, c/o KFJC-FM, 12345 El Monte Road, Los Altos Hills, CA 94022.

Robert E. Zepernick II

–Robert E. Zepernick II
General Manager, KFJC-FM

final rites.

Editor's Note: *The following is an excerpt from Alex Morgon's notebook. It was found after he was fatally shot in the head during his last show.*

. . . . so this is the end of Vinyl Rites, who would have thought that it would come this far. When Lyle started it three years ago and when I did Son Of Vinyl Rites, it was all L.A. and D.C. bands — now it's worldwide. The scope of the whole thing has changed and that's good, sort of . . . . A lot of people get the impression that V.R. is/was supposed to be all thrash. As you know, it's not and it wouldn't ever be. Vinyl Rites was punk rock — old style, thrash, noise and obnoxious stuff that made you sit up and take notice. Sometimes it made you sit up because of the politicalness of it. Sometimes because of the bad words, sometimes due to the sheer rawness of the performance. If it made you sit up for any reason at all, I'm satisfied. If not, then you are dead or deaf or both.

Being part of a "scene" (although I don't believe in the concept of a scene because it's just another elite group) for eight years or so (with several years at another local radio station) I've had the pleasure and the pain of seeing:

1. Shows going off real well
2. Gigs get shut down
3. People getting beat up by cops
4. Hall and venues trashed
5. People having a good time
6. People beating each other up

Now obviously items 2, 3, 4, and 6 were all painful. I cannot describe the feelings of seeing my friends being beaten senselessly by goon cops. Even more than that, someone being totally trashed by a "punk-er-than-thou" type. Although you can never be rid of that type of person, you'd think there would be more common sense. Just pipe dreams, I guess.

I never consciously preached politics to the V.R. audience. And there wasn't a black list of bands because of political/social preferences. Politics are for YOU to decide, not for some punk rock d.j. to decide for you. Yeah, anarchy, circle a's, smash the system, kill a cop — you got your bandannas, you got your spikes, you got your skinhead — now everyone say "BAAAAAAA" real loud like so many sheep.

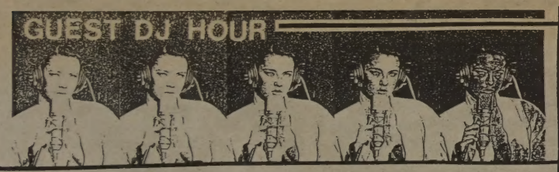
Other punk shows (you know who I mean, you little devils) *do* preach politics at you and they do blacklist certain bands for not having the correct political slant. That's their business, but if everyone did it, we sure would be anarchy, now wouldn't we???

If someone tries to force their views on you, question them! Following blindly under the guise of being knowledgeable is the goal of some of these — wipes. They'll get you to fight the "revolution" for them while they sit on their butts directing it all. If you get struck down for their "revolution," will they help you out? I think not. You are never too old or too young to question anything. The key is to *ask*.

So now it's back to the underground, so to speak — to get away from the new trend-mongers who profess that hardcore is their life, even though they were devoted Duran Duran and Police fans four months ago. These wannabees just wanna drop names and hobnob with them backstage and get paid for the whole thing. These people are vile! They have no more dedication to a punk ideal or to change than a parasite on a plant. "Oh, isn't punk rock great, we'll make lots of money off it . . . " Yeah, sure, walk backwards some more. This is it — question and think for yourself — *no one will do it for you!*

Enough of this. I've ranted enough. Thanks to everyone for the support along the way. Thanks to the Sessions crew: Joel, Mako, and John and thanks to the Thrasher crew: Kevin, Mo, and Matt for the moral and financial support to not only Vinyl Rites but to KFJC as well. Thanks especially to the Faction, the only South Bay band with enough drive to put out records and progress to a point of satisfaction. No other band in the South Bay deserves it more. (Other bands who have been around a long time and gripe about the Faction putting out records — stop complaining and get going!!!!). Finally, thanks to everyone I've forgotten to mention. Maybe I'll be back, then again maybe I won't. Jan and Jak, I'm coming home . . .

—Alex Morgon 2/27/85



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KFJC 89.7 FM

THE MARCH VIOLETS

On Monday, March 4, the March Violets made their West Coast debut in San Francisco. The following interview with Cleo, the singer of the band, was conducted by Lyle and Antone shortly before the show that night. The conversation began with a discussion about the Violets' plans to record an LP upon returning to the U.K.

CLEO: Natural History is a back catalog album. It's just a single's album, really. It's got the firsr four singles of the Violets' and two songs from a John Peel session. It's just a history, not really an album.

ANTONE: So was "Crow Baby" your first single?

CLEO: No. Our first single was "Religious as Hell" which is a four track EP. The second was "Grooving and Green" which is also on Natural History. Then "Crow Baby" which was on Rebirth, which is our own label, and the "Snake Dance" and "Walk Into the Sun." We've just recorded our latest single called "Deep." It should be out in the States about April, in 7 and 12 inch.

ANTONE: So Rebirth is your own label?

CLEO: That's right. The first two singles were on Merciful Release which you may know is the same label as Sisters of Mercy. But we got sick of that and decided to leave the label after the first two singles and form our own label. So we formed Rebirth and put out "Crow Baby." It's our own label, we do everything. We produce ourselves, do our own artwork, do our own promotion, we do everything and we make enough money to survive and get the band by very, very well.

ANTONE: Speaking of artwork, the Snakedance single has an interesting sleeve.

CLEO: Well, it's gold snakeskin which is very expensive for the band to do, but we felt for the audience it was worth it.

ANTONE: Are you interested in signing any other bands to Rebirth?

CLEO: No. We keep Rebirth solely for the Violets, but we do have a subsidiary label called Batfish and we do put other bands out on that label. We have put two bands out so far. Generally, if we do a gig and we have a support band we really like who has no recording deal, we offer to put them out on our label.

LYLE: Who are the two bands you have on your label?

CLEO: They're called the Batfish Boys and they have an album out which should be coming out here quite soon. The other band is an authentic rockabilly band called Pink Peg Slacks. They're the only two we have put out so far.

LYLE: Which part of England do you come from?

CLEO: London.

LYLE: The whole band?

CLEO: No. Half of the band came from Leeds originally, but everyone's moved down to London because it's the best place in England to be for recording and rehearsing, management, everything is in London so everyone lives there now.

LYLE: Do you like London? Is the music scene dismal or trendy?

CLEO: I like London itself 'cause of the choice. It's so vast that if you want to see a gig there's 20 bands playing, or if you want to see a film, you have a lot of choices. I think the music scene over there is pretty dismal . . . but that's gonna change.

ANTONE: With the March Violets?

CLEO: Definitely.

LYLE: Any personnel changes?

CLEO: We have, actually. We have used a Linn drum [computerized drum machine] for the past two years, but recently we acquired a real live drummer. We're basically a rock and roll band and we were mixing old and new. A good guitar sound with a new computerized drum set, but we felt it wasn't working. So we've gone whole hog for the rock and roll sound. It's also better visually. There's nothing better than seeing a drummer thrashing around at the back of the stage.

CLEO: Yeah. Loz and Tom formed the band three years ago with a male singer. The male singer we kicked out after "Walk Into the Sun" because the band was progressing so much and he wasn't. We just felt like we were carrying dead meat . . . and I don't know if you've ever seen him, but it was a lot of meat to carry around. So we got rid of him and now everything features the sole talents of me.

LYLE: How did the decision to start the band come about?

CLEO: Up until '76 I think a lot of people had a false idea about bands. They thought you had to be trained musicians and all that. Punk changed all that and anyone could play an instrument and create music. We were very interested in music, but we had our own ideas and thought we could do better than anyone else around so we formed our own band.

ANTONE: You've got a new single coming out. What else, what's ahead?

CLEO: We're coming back from the States in mid-March to record the new album which will feature all new stuff. We're a very prolific band. We rehearse five days a week and usually write about five new songs a week. We're very spontaneous. We've got hundreds of songs and we've decided to put some out on an album.

LYLE: Any video plans?

CLEO: Not at the moment. We are a very live band, and we rely a lot on our musical capabilities to get us by. We're not like those video bands, we're more interested in the live aspect. We may do a video in the near future, but it's got to be right. Everything we do is planned, our packaging, our image, our logo . . . and we haven't planned a video yet.

ANTONE: Is there any significance behind your logo, the star?

CLEO: Yeah, a five pointed star or pinnacle. A lot of people get that muddled up with an upside down star with two points at the top which is a sign of the occult which we're not into at all. I mean we're not Ozzy Osbourne. We don't go around eating chickens or bats. We're vegetarian and we just bite the heads off carrots. Apart from that, the symbol is just a good positive force with the "MV" inside. It works very well.

ANTONE: So all the members are vegetarian?

CLEO: Oh yeah, would you like a recipe?

LYLE: Sure, what's your recipe for . . .

CLEO: How about carrot soufflet?

LYLE: Okay, what's your secret?

CLEO: Beat it, beat it good.

LYLE: Does he play electronic drums?

CLEO: Like Simmons? No. We can't stand that electro-disco sound. It's an acoustic set.

ANTONE: I guess you have to pay a real drummer though.

CLEO: That's right, and a Linn drum never pinched any women. But, he's worth it.

LYLE: Any other changes?

LYLE: In a blender, or . . .

ANTONE: With a big drum beat?

CLEO: Yeah, that's right, a big drum beat.

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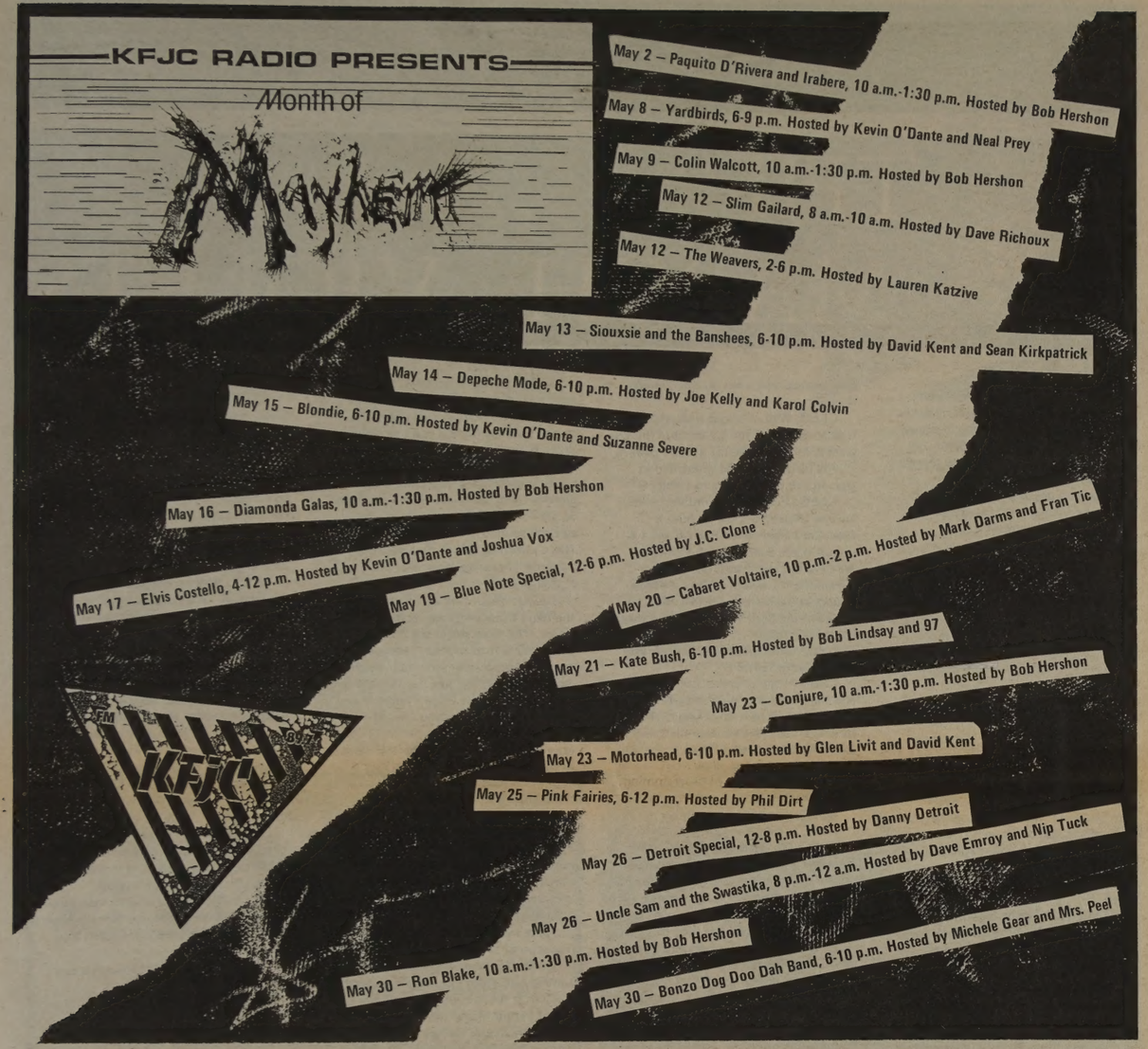
KFJC RADIO PRESENTS
Month of
Mayhem
May 2 – Paquito D'Rivera and Irabere, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Hosted by Bob Hershon
May 8 – Yardbirds, 6-9 p.m. Hosted by Kevin O'Dante and Neal Prey
May 9 – Colin Walcott, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Hosted by Bob Hershon
May 12 – Slim Gaillard, 8 a.m.-10 a.m. Hosted by Dave Richoux
May 12 – The Weavers, 2-6 p.m. Hosted by Lauren Katzive
May 13 – Siouxsie and the Banshees, 6-10 p.m. Hosted by David Kent and Sean Kirkpatrick
May 14 – Depeche Mode, 6-10 p.m. Hosted by Joe Kelly and Karol Colvin
May 15 – Blondie, 6-10 p.m. Hosted by Kevin O'Dante and Suzanne Severe
May 16 – Diamonda Galas, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Hosted by Bob Hershon
May 17 – Elvis Costello, 4-12 p.m. Hosted by Kevin O'Dante and Joshua Vox
May 19 – Blue Note Special, 12-6 p.m. Hosted by J.C. Clone
May 20 – Cabaret Voltaire, 10 p.m.-2 p.m. Hosted by Mark Darms and Fran Tic
May 21 – Kate Bush, 6-10 p.m. Hosted by Bob Lindsay and 97
May 23 – Conjure, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Hosted by Bob Hershon
May 23 – Motorhead, 6-10 p.m. Hosted by Glen Livit and David Kent
May 25 – Pink Fairies, 6-12 p.m. Hosted by Phil Dirt
May 26 – Detroit Special, 12-8 p.m. Hosted by Danny Detroit
May 26 – Uncle Sam and the Swastika, 8 p.m.-12 a.m. Hosted by Dave Emroy and Nip Tuck
May 30 – Ron Blake, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Hosted by Bob Hershon
May 30 – Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band, 6-10 p.m. Hosted by Michele Gear and Mrs. Peel
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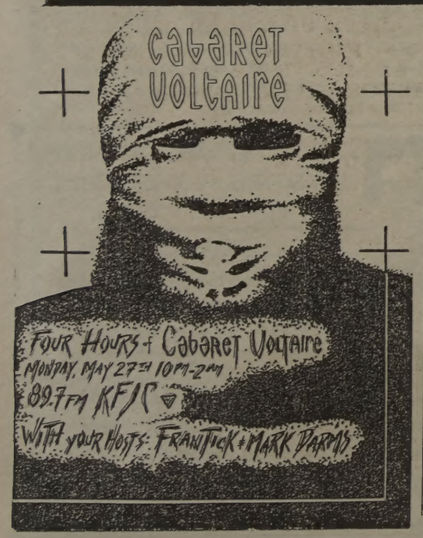

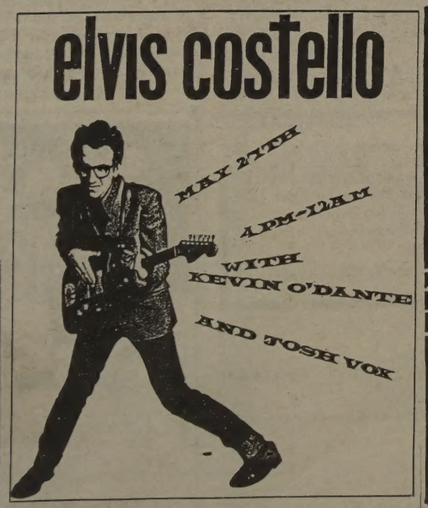

K F J C
a quarter century young

By George Saunders

At 8 p.m. on Oct. 20, 1984, KFJC celebrated the 25th anniversary of its initial broadcast sign on. To commemorate the silver anniversary of one of the longer running college FM radio stations, KFJC has had and is planning several special activities and projects over the duration of its 26th year of operation.

One of the first commemorative items was originating broadcast from the station's recently completed new air studio. As a part of the over $50,000 KFJC expansion and remodeling project, the new air studio contains updated and higher quality equipment to improve the station's air sound and broadcast training capabilities. Listeners who remember the May 1983 fundraising drive can now see as well as hear what their contributions helped finance. (Listener donations accounted for about one-third of the project cost, with Foothill College picking up the rest of the tab.)

Another of KFJC's birthday specials offered the opportunity for local musicians to perform live and on the air. For 25 consecutive nights, 25 different local bands brought their equipment up to the station and played hour long sets of their best material. Extra thanks are due to event coordinator Buddy Awreetus, who should be released from the laughing academy any day now.

Throughout its year long anniversary celebration, KFJC is offering limited edition commemorative merchandise. A special 25th anniversary logo was designed and embedded on a wide variety of items. A list of available items should be somewhere in this issue of WAVES. An additional reason for selling this merchandise is to raise money for the station. Although Foothill College pays the basic costs required to operate the station, it is through support from local merchants and listeners that KFJC is able to offer a wider variety of programming for the community, and a more complete training experience for the station staff members. The nights of 25 live bands, broadcast of Foothill Owl sports, and each issue of WAVES are a few examples of additional station functions supported by community listeners and businesses. A hefty chunk of the station's regular operating costs comes from contributions, also. Los Altos Stationers, for example, provides an annual $3,000 worth of office supplies. Although we don't mention it on the air, patronizing the merchants whose announcements air on KFJC also helps the station by encouraging the merchants to continue or increase support to the station.

With all this support, why sell 25th anniversary merchandise to raise money for KFJC? Recently, many non-commercial stations have been flooding the airwaves with on-air emergency fund raisers To avoid subjecting our listening audience and staff to the seemingly endless pledge breaks of these beg-a-thons, KFJC is trying to meet its goals by the sale of premiums. The 25th anniversary merchandise should be viewed in the same way a donation premium for another station is viewed, but without the pledge breaks. All of the money received by the merchants who stock our items goes directly to the station. There is no handling charge or commission paid to the merchant. Although it may seem expensive to pay $7 for a KFJC coffee mug, what would you receive if you pledged the same amount to any other non-commercial station?

One final item of KFJC's 25th anniversary needs mention. Late March saw the KFJC Record Swap. This music oriented flea market featured records of all types, from 78 rpm's of the 1940s through modern day picture discs. Record collectors and dealers from all over the Bay Area had an opportunity to buy, sell, and trade new and used music. The swap also featured an auction of rare and unusual items, as well as celebrity guest DJs broadcasting from KFJC's remote booth at the site.

What other plans does KFJC have in mind for the rest of its 25th birthday? Informed sources within the station management won't give any specifics except for the warning, "Watch out. Next year we'll be 26."

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still rockin' steady

Photo by Robert Lohse

By Rankin' Rob

Alton's career has spanned the evolution of Jamaican music. His singing days began in the days of ballads, calypso and R&B, before Jamaica had any recording or broadcast studios. His music has held strong through pre-ska, ska, rocksteady, continuing to the reggae of today. He has worked with such greats as Coxone Doss of Studio One, and Duke Reid of Treasure Isle studios and bands from the early Skatalites and beyond. His music has served as an inspiration to many reggae artists and fans alike. KFJC gives thanks to Alton Ellis for this interview and to Sonic Boom Records, Doug Wendt, John Blackwood and Spliff Skankin' for making the interview possible. I spoke with Alton Ellis on his recent West Coast tour. He spoke about his songs and the history of Jamaican music.

RANKIN': Alton, you've been singing for many years and you've seen reggae from its origins to the present time. What was it like in the early days?

ALTON: Yeah, I've seen it from its baby stage to its adult stage. Yeah, I've been through it. First of all I would like to say thanks to all who listen to Alton Ellis' music and to those who are interested in the music, I give thanks. Now back to the beginning of the music and my career. In 1959 I did my first song and at that time there was no set pattern of music in Jamaica. We jus record anything that was recordable like blues, ballads, calypso and the lot. Then I find myself branching out into ska and from ska it becomes a little slower and it go down to rocksteady, the same speed continued to reggae only that we are emphasizing a different part of the music. The reggae influence goes on the drum and bass. It's a long road mi bredrn — 25 years and I'm still around. It's nice for people to be interested in what's happening.

RANKIN': What about the recording studios back then. What was it like to record?

ALTON: Looking back on it, it was a trip, a proper trip. We enjoyed it, down to the final day, nothing good don't come easy. It was a big struggle from that time even until now, but what we achieve today makes everything worthwhile. It wasn't the money we were doing it for, there was no money in it and what little there was the producer held on to. Duke Reid of Treasure Isle Studios even have an attitude to shoot up the studio if things weren't right.

RANKIN': Did he really carry guns in holdsters like a cowboy?

ALTON: Yes, Duke always like that and whenever he is in a bad mood he might fling shots in the ceiling or the piano, time and time again — well, dangerous. Recording with Coxone Dodd was also a trip. Here is a bredda that is well beloved, fortunate and intelligent and he use all of these advantage and oppress his bredren, which is Inl. We did a lot of good things together. Coxone was the producer and we were the singers and if we made any money, it is fair that we should be as happy as Coxone. It wasn't like that, and I must tell you that 90 percent of all artists who recorded with him love him very much and hate him at the same time. He is a wonderful man, but the business side is different. His main objective was to rob an artist. No matter how much money you make you can't get any royalties from him. I personally love Coxone, but just that deep selfishness show him other side. It is really love for music that we do it, not for money.

RANKIN': What things were an influence in your early career?

ALTON: Well, it's basically the R&B sound from the states. I always have my musical inclinations and I began in the business as a dancer. In school I used to sing and my first big influence was when I was at Boys Town School. The Governor of Jamaica came to visit and there was a presentation and out of all the youths he shook my hand and a bell click in my head — what was so special about me? It never dawn on me that singing was what I was really going to do.

Later a friend of mine, Ed Parkins, who lived near me, asked me to sing with him. I said okay and we started practicing every day. Another friend of mine, Father G, he gave me the written lyrics for "Muriel." Every day at work I would try to put a melody to "Muriel" and every evening I would show Ed my progress, until the song was finished. We went to the studio and recorded the song. It was a big hit and even today it is one of the best vocal songs to come from Jamaica.

Ed went to the States to work with Ed Sullivan show, so I decided to form my own group, Alton and the Flames. Our first hit was "Dance Crasher." I always wanted Lloyd Charmers to join my group. He had just broke up with the Charmers, so we decided to sing together. He was the bass vocal on the song, "Cry Tough." "How can a man feel tough . . . "

RANKIN': Were those songs your response to the times? There were some pretty rough times then with the rude boys weren't there.

ALTON: Well, it was getting rough. Not as rough as it is now, but yeah, I observe this and see something was happening in regards to society, a change was coming. People were so aggressive, they were crazy and I couldn't take it. So I began to sing in regards to what was happening around me. "Cry Tough," "Dance Crashers," and "Big Bad Boy" — all those songs were dedicated to the situation. Out of that I wrote those songs, but I had to stop because Bob Marley was on the other side singing about the rude boys, like "Rudie Get Taller," and I was the opposite, understand? We were living in the same area of Trenchtown and all the youths knew us. So they began to take sides. They began to admire Bob and get more vicious with me and I tell my producer Duke Reid of Treasure Isle studios that I'm not going to sing anymore songs against the rude boys because the guys in my area are getting uneasy with me, and I drop that style of recording and go back to songs like, "I'm Still in Love," "Breaking Up Is Hard To Do" and "Girl I've Got a Date."

RANKIN'. Can you explain the changes of the music from ska to reggae?

ALTON: As I said before, all we did was take down the tempo. I wouldn't say it was a willful thing, it jus happen by vibes, we jus keep recording and found we were going in a direction that was desirable. The music becomes slower and it allows the bassman to play more lines, more notes and allows him to play a more melodious pattern. So this is one of the advantages of coming down from ska to rocksteady, it feel more relaxed and then we move on to reggae with the bass and drum. This is why the music is so dominant today; they are concentrating on the bass and drum — it can be seen, you can look at Sly and Robbie and people like that and realize that the bass and drum is what's really happening. They are stars in them own right, up front. The same thing with the Roots Radics: the bass and drum are the stars. This is why the music is so dominant and forceful today.

RANKIN'. How would you define rocksteady?

ALTON: Rocksteady has a steadier rhythm and a more melodious sound than ska. Both the bass and vocals are more melodious. The drummer in rocksteady is playing on the edge of the rim instead of the middle of the snare. In rocksteady you get a "conk" sound on the drum, rather than the slap sound of the snare in reggae. The true sense between rocksteady, reggae and ska is that rocksteady and reggae are slower and more melodious in vocals and rhythm than ska.

RANKIN': How did you get the rich harmonies and melodies of rocksteady vocal style?

ALTON: We were stressing that part of the music. The vocals are the leader. The instrument is there to back up the voice, so the musicians played all they could to help the vocalist. You see, the rhythm was built around the lyrics. Now is a different thing, you have to carry the lyrics a different way to fit the rhythem — they are making the lyrics to fit the rhythm — not the rhythm to fit the lyrics. This is what is happening in reggae, it has to have a special sound, a forceful and aggressive sound, and even if you have a nice melodious song, by the time you're finished with it it is inclined to go in that direction.

RANKIN': Do you think the vocals transcend the music?

ALTON: Yeah mon, that's the way we used to rehearse — acappella. When we began, we used to make a whole band playing the table or a pan or whatever they could find to make a riddim and then pure vocals, you might even have someone do a vocal bass line — whatever — the vocal is what we were paying more attention to. Reggae is a different thing, it is the rhythm.

RANKIN': What was a typical recording session?

ALTON: We start recording at 11 o'clock each day up until seven. It was like a factory. I go there in the morning and I can see all the other artists, 30 or so artists all together, from Rita and Bob Marley, Bob Andy, Delroy Wilson, Ken Boothe, John Holt all in one place. We lay tracks for four weeks and then voicing for the next two months.

RANKIN'. Who were some of the musicians you worked with?

ALTON: Jackie Mitoo, an arranger from about age 16. He used to come to the studio in his school uniform and arrange. Also Roland Alphonso, Lloyd Brevitt, Blewitt Johnson, these are the early guys, then it move to guys like Leroy Sibbles on bass and people were always changing. Bands would come and go for months at a time, it was like a production scene.

RANKIN': Was that when you started doing different versions of the same songs on the same rhythm?

ALTON: No, that happen later, because now the reggae biz is more active, we're supplying the world with music, so they don't slow down to create, no time for that, so they jus go back to the original music and make a new song. This has been going on for the past eight years.

RANKIN': Do you think this is slowing down the music?

ALTON: The youth are in a fix. They stop create, they stop searching forward. They are not creating anything new, it's what we have done before. It is really doing a damage to the music in one sense, on the other hand it gives a song a new lease and sometimes a different view, but then again what about the new ideas to keep the music going? Are they saying it stops here? No way it has to go further. Doing that is fine, but don't overdo it.

RANKIN': Do you have a favorite song?

ALTON: Everytime someone asks me that question, I feel I should go back to the beginning. Think of a child — what is the most important thing to a man's being? The most important thing for a man is to be born. A man have to be born first before he can be a lawyer, doctor or whatever. So "Muriel" was my first song and it was a big song — it gave me confidence. Everytime I think which one I love the best I say "Muriel." Yet there are songs that were more successful like "Girl I've Got A Date" made five hit tunes. "Girl I've Got A Date," U-roy's "Wake the Town," "Liquidator" which was No. 1 in England, "I'll Take You There" by The Staple Singers, sell over 30 million.

RANKIN': How did you write "Girl I've Got A Date"?

ALTON: Two things really: Delroy Wilson have out the song "Dancing Mood." It lifted me up and also Delroy and I were in competition, so it push me. Also with a special woman beside me, those inspire me to write it.

RANKIN': What are you presently working on?

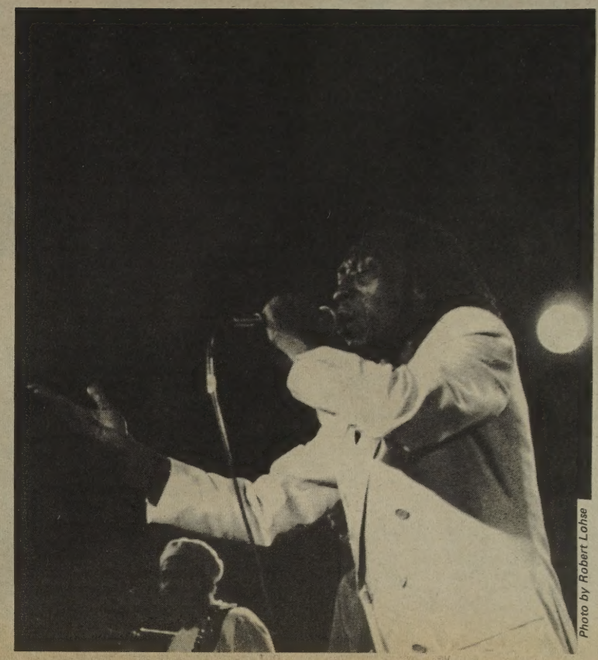
ALTON: Everything has gone well for me since I went back to Jamaica in '81. Like I was in London for a while, I didn't really approve of the songs there 'til I went back home in '81. This was the next big test to see if I could do it again. I was with the Roots Radics band and I was very inspired. We put out the lp "Love On Top" with two number one hits on it. I was very happy with that.

RANKIN': What new lp's can we expect?

ALTON: Personally I have four albums in the works now. One is a collection record, Vol. 2 of 25th Jubilee lp, a soul lp and one unfinished lp, so I have four lp's coming soon.

RANKIN'. Thank you, Alton, for spending this time to talk and guidance on your future efforts — we'll be listening . . .

ALTON: Thanks and one love to each and everyone.



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1-6pm Fran Tic . . .
Five hours of hardcore dance music

6-10pm Josh Vox . . .
Musical mindscapes for errant souls

10pm-2am Mark Darms . . .
Gloomy music made for an industrial world

TUESDAYS

2-6am Sunja Park . . .
Very cool

6-10am Anita and Darren . . .
Music to wake up from nice dreams with

10am-1pm Geordie . . .
Reggae hits at high noon

1-5pm Mrs. Peel . . .
Featuring surprise endings from the second spy file

5-6pm People in Peninsula Politics with your host Don Surath . . .
Local political activists face KFJC listeners and host Don Surath

6-10pm Ransome Youth . . .
The kind of pop noise you might expect from an overweight, nearly 30-year-old, overworked and underpaid punkrock family man.

10pm-2am J.C. Clone . . .
Progressive, jazz, soul, blues, old stuff, new stuff, and even some new wave.

WEDNESDAYS

2-6am Juan Perona . . .
Live from Yuba City or Argentina, or . . .

6-10am Hawkeye . . .
Lose your breakfast in style

10am-1pm Johnny Rockit . . .
Rock-a-billy and roots music show

1-6pm Who knows . . .

6-9pm Kevin O'Dante . . .
The night train . . . all aboard

9-10pm Musical Chairs with Mark Elliott . . .
Music business is featured

10pm-2am Raggin' Lauren . . .
Music to keep you wondering

THURSDAYS

2-6am Thrashman . . .
Coming up at five o'clock, 'Agro Vomit,' one-half hour of your favorite hardcore

6-10am Derek . . .
You just might hear anything

10am-1pm Bob Hershon . . .
Bob Hershon mixes with the Soul Patrol

1-6pm Dennis the Menace . . .
Make it a 'so happy it's Thursday' afternoon with a ballistic attack of volume.

6-9pm Straight, No Chaser with Glen Livit . . .
Nobody said life was fair

9-10pm Mae Brussells World Watchers International

10pm-2am Elvira . . .
Experience bizarre inner feelings that make you do things you thought you had morals about

SUNDAYS

2-6am Joe Friday . . .
One can never tell . . . tune in

6-9am David Richoux and the Jazz Parade . . .
Featuring music mostly from the first half of the century; traditional Jazz, Ragtime, Big Band, Country, Swing, and Novelty.

9-10am Mae Brussells World Watchers International

10am-2pm Brother D . . .
Put a dip in your hip and a glide in your stride. Connect with the mother ship for an all day ride

2-5pm Lou York . . .
The gateway to infinity

5-8pm Spliff Skankin'
Joh's music . . . reggae music gone international featuring new releases, live recordings, interviews, and the Black music calendar at 7pm

8-9pm Hard Rain with your host Dave Emory

9-11pm One Step Beyond with Hosts Nip Tuck and Dave Emory

11pm-2am Who knows . . .

SATURDAYS

2-6am Angelic . . .
Fast, upbeat 'a-little-too-fast-to-dance-to' stuff

6-9am Arnold Layne . . .
60s and 70s progressive music

9am-noon Robert Emmett . . .
The Norman Bates Memorial Soundtrack Show . . . a variety of showtunes, TV themes, and movie soundtracks, really sharp stuff.

Noon-3pm Patrick and Modern Violence . . .
Listen every Saturday and realize your own short comings

nooo-3pm ????

3-6pm Neal Prey . . .
Takes garage music out of the garage, and parks it on your speakers

6-10pm Phil Dirt . . .
This is the real stuff – all instrumental – bands like the Surfari's, Surf Raiders, Dick Dale, and the Halibuts. Surf's up at 7pm

10pm-2am Stretch . . .
Get your nehru jacket out and go back to the days of garage music. At midnight it's the Aboriginal Stomp, an alternative album played in its entirety. Historical information also provided.

FRIDAYS

2-6am Bob Lindsey . . .
New wave, heavy pop, light pop, dance music, soul and more

6-10am Dan Dart . . .
Venom meets James Brown in outer space

10am-1pm Rankin' Robert . . .
Top rankin' reggae music from Jamaica and beyond

1-6pm Ninety-Seven . . .
This show proves being odd can be fun

6-10pm Diana . . .
So much fun you could puke

10pm-2am Lucky . . .
A challenge for your mind, ears, and body

Photo by Clay Holden

wavves

words or wisdom

"Play with your own life. Don't play with mine."
—Headboys
—"Shape of Things to Come"
—Mark Lane

"Her eyes are a deeper blue.
She likes her hair that color too."
—Social Distortion
—"Mommy's Little Monster"
—Janie Jones

"Generals and majors always seem so unhappy unless they got a war."
—XTC
—"Generals & Majors"
—Fran Tick

"I'm painting by numbers, but can't find the colours to fill you in."
—Buzzcocks
—"I Believe"
—Selma Wares

"Money doesn't talk, it swears."
—Bob Dylan
—Neal Prey

"They're telling me, but I'm telling them, I'll do it my way and I'll always win, when the sun goes down I'm ready to play, it doesn't matter anyway."
—Social Distortion
—"Telling Them"
—Derek Hoyle

"Everyone's happy, they're finally all the same, 'cause everyone's jumping everybody else's train."
—The Cure
—"Jumping Someone Else's Train"
—Selma Wares

"I wish you luck with a capital "F"
—Elvis Costello
—"Love Went Mad"
—97

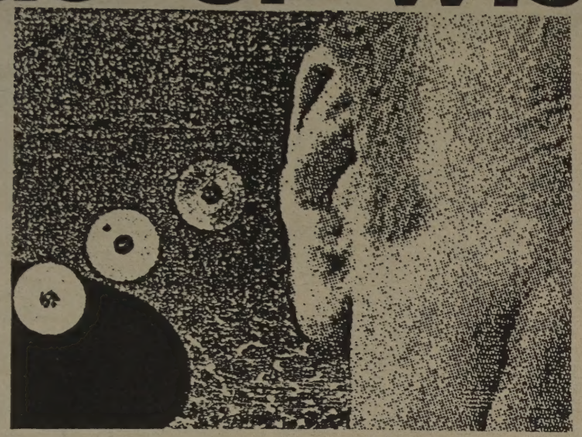
"O.K. kid, we're gonna shave 'em dry now. You don't know what a shave 'em dry is?!! . . . YOU'LL LEARN!
—Stranglers
—"Old Codger"
—Joshua Vox

"Who am I? To want and wander, to wait for the wheel of fate slowly grinding my life away. Who am I."
—Country Joe and the Fish
—"Who am I"
—Lucky

"When you're alive they won't care what you said
What you deserve and all the blood you bled
'Cos everybody loves you when you're dead."
—The Stranglers
—Ransome Youth

"One God. One church. One husband. One wife.
Sordid sequences in a brilliant life."
—Crass
—Fran Tick

"The path of least resistance leads to the garbage heap of despair . . .
I'm just a symptom of the Moral Decay
That's gnawing at the heart of the country."
—The The
—"The Sinking Feeling"
—Ransome Youth



"The dreams in which I'm dying are the best I've ever had."
—Tears for Fears
—"Mad World"
—Scott Collins

"Hoogh! Hah One HepMe!
Hoolo AAGHHH!"
—James Brown
—Just About Anything
—Antone

"Thoughts are deceptive, this ain't paradise.
Believe what you see, believe what you feel
Immortally foolish, so catagorized."
—Drunk Injuns
—"Mental Holocaust"
—Bill Christman

"Checks you signed with love and kisses later come back signed 'insufficient funds' . . . Can you get to that?"
—Funkadelic
—"Can You Get to That"
—Hawkeye Joe

"We wanta party, we don't want a war
Too many gringos in El Salvador
Don't do it again
I ain't no ugly American."
—Party of Five
—"Tegucigalpa"
—Patrick's Modern Violence

"You can get scared when it gets too real, but you should be digging it while it's happening — cause it just might be a one shot deal."
—Frank Zappa
—"Grand Wazoo"
—David Richoux

"Write ZOOM Box 350
Boston, Massachusetts."
—Kids from TV Show ZOOM
—"Theme from ZOOM Mail"
—Antone

"I'll learn to work the saxaphone
I play just what I feel.
Drink Scotch Whiskey all night long
and die behind the wheel
They got a name for the winners of the world
I want a name when I lose."
—Steely Dan
—"Deacon Blues"
—Ransome Youth

"Tell me why my blood runs cold."
—Members
—"Fire"
—Tara Page

"Freaks come out at night."
—Whodini
—Brother D

"Is this love, baby, or is it just, uh, confusion?"
—Jimi Hendrix
—"Love or Confusion"
—Hawkeye Joe

"I don't need no TV screen.
Just stick the aerial into my skin."
—The Normal
—"TV OD"
Fran Tick

"Maybe one day things will change."
—The Saints
—"Church of Indifference"
—Sherman Peabody

"Is death the final high?"
—D.I.
—"Richard Hung Himself"
—Janie Jones

"If you're looking for love in a looking glass world, it's very hard to find."
—Roxy Music
—"Mother of Pearl"
—Kevin O'Dante

"I'm waiting for a guide to come and take me by the hand."
—Joy Division
"Disorder"
—Suzanne Severe

"Give it to me baby."
—Rick James
—Denace the Menace

"When people listen to you don't you know it means a lot
'Cos you've got to work so hard for everything you've got
Can't rest on your laurels now
Not when you've got none
You'll find yourself in a gutter right back where you came from."
—Joy Division
—"Novelty"
—Ransome Youth

"I was dancing when I was eight — Is it strange to dance so late?"
—Marc Bolan
—"Cosmic Dancer"
—David Kent

"The children in Cambodia are dying, but I just want to surf."
—Mood of Defiance
—"Surfin on Articicial Waves"
—Mark Darms

"I wish I was in Tiajuana, eating barbequed iguana."
—Wall of Voodoo
—"Mexican Radio"
—Tom Bailey

"I just want to be your dog."
—The Stooges
—Danny Detroit

"Very first time I saw your face I thought of a song and quickly changed the tune."
—The Cure
—"Primary"
—Selma Wares

"How could you leave me?
When I needed to possess you
I hated you, I loved you too."
—Kate Bush
—"Wuthering Heights"
—Fran Tick

"you see
you feel
you know
react
you're waiting . . . . a call
you're waiting . . . . call
CHANGE!
CHANGE!
CHANGE!"
—Killing Joke
—Ransome Youth

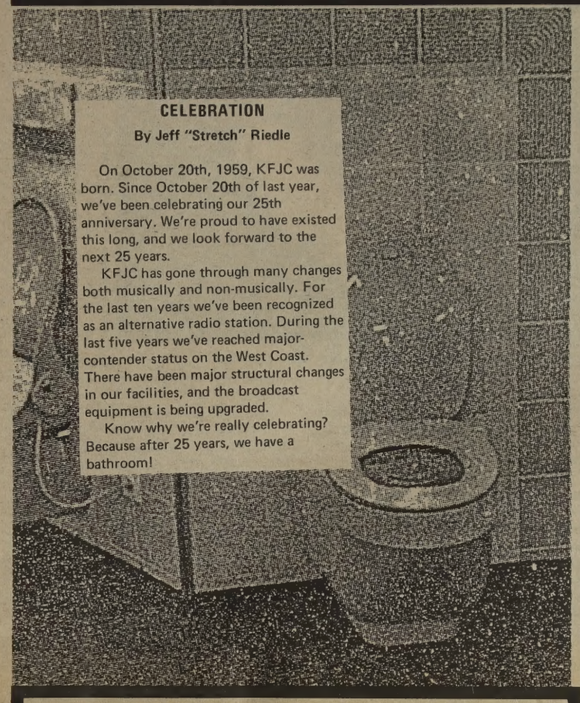
"Absence makes the heart grow fonder
So I never want to see you again."
—X
—"How I Learned My Lesson"
—97

"I feel like Jesus Christ heading for the station."
—Sonic Assassins
—"Deathtrap"
—Phil Dirt

"A moment of purpose —
It feels good just to be —
and just to dance."
—Necropolis of Love
—"Dance"
—Fran Tick

"Why is it that rock stars always seem to lie so much."
—Rudimentary Peni
—"Rotten to the Core"
—Mark Darms

"Just think for a minute
We can make this war so big
So big
The more people we kill in this war
The more the economy will prosper
We can get rid of practically everybody
On your . . . dole queues
If we plan this right
Take every loafer on welfare right off
Our computer rolls."
—Dead Kennedys
—"Kinky Sex Makes the World Go Round"
—Patrick's Modern Violence



CELEBRATION

By Jeff "Stretch" Riedle

On October 20th, 1959, KFJC was born. Since October 20th of last year, we've been celebrating our 25th anniversary. We're proud to have existed this long, and we look forward to the next 25 years.

KFJC has gone through many changes both musically and non-musically. For the last ten years we've been recognized as an alternative radio station. During the last five years we've reached major-contender status on the West Coast. There have been major structural changes in our facilities, and the broadcast equipment is being upgraded.

Know why we're really celebrating? Because after 25 years, we have a bathroom!

surf wax

By Phil Dirt

Playing a lot of instrumental surf music has brought two major audience reactions.

The first is extreme exhilaration over long forgotten or newly discovered bent wet guitars. There's a great demand from those who haven't heard this music in years; those who had almost forgotten its vibrant power and the delight of the spring reverb. There's the excitement of first time discovery for those too young to remember or who simply missed it the first time around. In either case, the gleeful adrenal reaction is the same. The power of the surf runs through your veins!

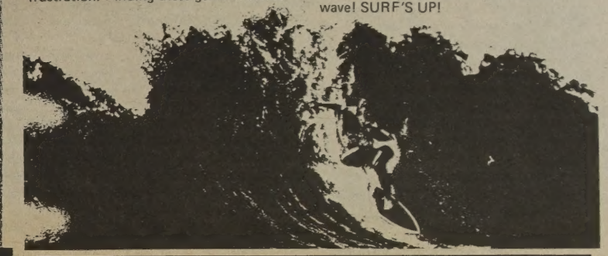
The second reaction is one of frustration. Finding these gems in stores is a major task, often nearly impossible. Even the recently issued material is seldom stocked. If you can imagine going into a store like Tower that stocks 60 or 100,000 titles and finding no surf music, then you know the feelings.

There are several methods of search that will eventually yield up most any surf record you might desire:

1. Visit a lot of record stores, particularly used.
2. Order from your dealer items that are in print.
3. Go to the monthly record swaps.
4. Place an ad in GoldMine magazine.

If you would like more information of sources of a partial list of surf music now in print, write to me at: KFJC, 12345 El Monte Road, Los Altos Hills, CA 94022.

Here's hoping you find the perfect wave! SURF'S UP!



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DIAMANDA GALAS

Photo by Dennis Keeley, CBS Records

When I saw Diamonda at the Kabuki Theatre, as part of the symphony's New and Unusual Music Series, she performed "Eyes Without Blood" and "Panoptikon."

Diamonda's performance starts as soon as she mounts the stage in her flowing black gown, bride of Dracula make-up and coiffure. Gathering her mikes around her, she descends into a trance state. With the aid of her three and a half octave voice, she starts singing and screaming at you in tongues. This vocal wall of sound is heightened by the expert manipulation of her signal processing equipment (Lexicon digital delay, Eventide harmonizer and Lexicon digital reverb) and her use of advanced natural harmonics such as multi-phonics. So now there are three, not one, furies circling in and around your head.

Diamonda Galas (her real name — she is of Greek descent) trained classically first as a pianist, then as a vocalist. While she concentrated on piano she played with such jazz greats as David Murray (World Sax Quartet) and Bobby Bradford. She turned to voice as a vehicle to create a new type of music and more complete self-expression.

DIAMONDA: "Panoptikon" is a model for your own life, intense claustrophobia and paranoia, which to me is the natural state of mind. I think all my music is about violence, paranoia, and blood feuds. Somebody asks me what I'm inspired by, "Oh equally Wagner and Charles Bronson." It's the stuff that happens on the street. I think constantly about protecting myself. I'm always in a state of alert, so naturally the music's going to be about that.

RH: Most singers with your range and training sing in a very "civilized" way. When you're on stage, the sirens are screaming.

DIAMONDA: That's the reason I got into voice, because I wanted to express everything I felt at the time. Anyone who knows anything about improvisation knows that you're there and anything you experienced on the street you bring to where you're working. So when I started performing, I wasn't thinking musically, but emotionally. I went to study because I was limited by what I could sing. What I was hearing, I couldn't realize. I went for an audition with a vocal coach and couldn't get through a passage of Mozart without taking four breaths. He said, "How can you sing . . . avant-garde . . . if you can't sing this. I train with my voice like a fighter. I believe you're a fighter. When you decide to do what I do, you're in a ring . . .

RH: People I guess will inevitably relate to you as a performance artist.

DIAMONDA: I don't understand that. I think they think it's performance art because . . .

RH: It's a good word?

DIAMONDA: I guess! There's all sorts of solutions for uncreative thinking. Performance art for me comes out of the visual tradition. I come out of an auditory or sonic arts tradition. My concept of performance is coliseum performance. If they like you, you live; if they don't, you die. I use the audience as a lie detector . . . . But what the heck, if I can get 10 bucks at the door for being called a performance artist, instead of five for what I really do, that's all right with me.

By Robert Hershon

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live show reviews

Let's Active, Chris Stamey, and Flying Color at Wolfgang's, San Francisco, Tuesday, March 5, 1985

—Lyle Sanda and Diana Campa

On a cold and rainy night that even produced hail on Columbus Street, Let's Active played to a fairly-packed house at Wolfgang's. This was the second time this (formely a trio, now a) quartet from Winston-Salem, North Carolina, played in the Bay Area in less than three months. All thanks to what was originally intended as a tour of just the South, left out of their previous tour in support of last fall's "Cypress" LP, which eventually stretched out and became a seven-week nationwide tour. This San Francisco date was among the last on this tour.

Crisping through a set which included most of the material from both of their releases, the "Afoot" EP, from late '83, and the sparkling "Cypress" album. From the sad laments of "Edge of the World" to a more-uptempo-than-the-record version of "Blue Line," Mitch Easter (vocals, lead guitar), Faye Hunter (vocals, bass), Jay Peck (drums), and Tim Lee (rhythm guitar, keyboard, vocals) varied the set splendidly, including the non-recorded, bouncy "Whispered News." Included in the encore was "Waters Part," the KFJC "hit" from "Cypress," and their finale was a cover of Slade's (Yes, *Slade;* this combo are amazingly esoteric in their choice of covers) "Won't Let It 'Appen Again," with Lee switching to bass and Hunter on lead screaming.

On this tour the whole band, especially new members Lee and Peck, who both had only one week to rehearse before setting off on the prior tour, seemed much looser and fired up.

Let's Active's live sound is different from their recorded, and who can really blame them with production maestro Mitch Easter fronting the band. In fact Easter himself says that when recording a record he believes a pure *record* record should be the aim, since it must be able to endure the test of time, and he doesn't worry about re-creating the whole sound live. The excitement and energy of a live performance are important to a show, too, Easter feels. Let's Active live do put it together, just in a different way than on vinyl.

Support act Chris Stamey and his band were also swell, performing material from their recent EP, "Instant Excitement," as well as a couple of numbers he recorded while in the DBs. The band consisted of Cathy Harrington and Mary Mac (who together comprise a N.Y. duo known as Venus Two) on keyboards and vocals, and Ted Lyons on drums, all of whom play on the "Instant Excitement" EP. That's right, no stringed bass, just Mac's keyboard bass lines which made for a different and extremely pleasant pop sound, highlighted by Stamey's "omnipresent" guitar playing. From the opening "Excitement" to the funkish stop-start "Brush Fire in Hoboken" (Hoboken, N.J. is Stamey's hometown) to a hauntingly beautiful rendition of "Oh Yeah" (from his "It's A Wonderful Life" LP), Stamey and company delivered a clean and refreshing brand of offbeat pop.

Opening support act was Flying Color, featuring some ex-members of San Francisco's Love Circus. Way cool, at least for the one-half song total this reporting duo saw.

Toxic Reasons, The Dicks, M.I.A. Whipping Boy and Special Forces The Farm, San Francisco Friday, March 1, 1985

—Elvira

No beating around the bush here, this was a terrific show. As a matter of fact, I'd have to say one of the best I've seen this year. First off, my apologies to Special Forces. They started the show off, so naturally I missed them. They're a Berkeley-based band who play around the Bay Area regularly and if they were anywhere near their normal standards (which I hear they were), they put on a more than satisfactory set.

Coming in on the middle of Whipping Boy I could tell that they are still the energetic band they've always been . . . even after some member changes. Eugene is a dynamic entertainer and seems to exude energy and throw it into the audience, where it's quickly eaten up. They were pretty tight and seem to have things down real well. Things have mellowed stylistically for these guys and their songs have taken on a psychedelic tone. One of my particular favorites that sticks to mind is "Sunshine Nellie" with its twanging guitars. Whipping Boy is progressing, and if they keep it up, I think they'll really do things. (You name for yourself *what* things.)

As for M.I.A., well, since their van broke down, not much to say about them. Better luck next time, guys!

Local favorites the Dicks put on a great show. Their set included obvious favorites: "Dicks Hate Police" and "No F----- War." (Actually, the whole set was a crowd pleaser.) As many times as I've seen this band, I never tire of them. Hope to be hearing more from them on vinyl soon.

It's been at least a year since Toxic Reasons last played the Bay Area and it's been a year too long. They blazed from the moment they stepped on and the energy lasted until *after* they were off. Their set included the perfect combination of the old and new. The old included "Mercenaries" and "Revolution" as well as a great rendition of "Ghost Town," complete with a guest saxaphonist. The new were songs from the upcoming "Within These Walls" LP, soon to be released.

All particulars and details aside, it was a superb show, and if you weren't there, you should be wishing you were. Hope to be seeing the Toxic Reasons again, only this time I hope they won't make us wait another year.

Wailing Souls The Stone, March 17, 1985

—Mattye Ruel

The most appealing aspect of the Wailing Souls is their harmonies. The second appealing aspect is they are roots. The vocal quartet offers a consistent, pleasant sound on record backed by a carefully selected group of roots musicians. Live at the Stone they continued in the same vein. Every song has a strong groove fronted by the perfection of the group's vocal abilities. They all sing very good, leaving most of the lead parts to Pipe and Bread. Garth and Buddy provided excellent backing vocals. In the first set, the Wailing Souls performed an array of material from earlier albums, including the enticing "Bredda Gravilicious." In the second set the quartet, dressed as usual in matching attire and skanking vigorously, were even better. The title song from their current album, "Stranded," was the big hit of the night.

The overall performance, however, was less than perfect (due mainly to technical problems).

The Freedom Fighters band provided instrumental backup. (The eight-member group includes members from the defunct L.A.-based Small Axe.) The bass, drums and rhythm guitar were the gist of the roots sound. The lead guitar player concentrated primarily on pick guitar, but his occasional leads were inappropriately Hendrix-type with full use of effects: wah, chorus and flanger. The female guitar player was a rhythm player most of the time, but early in the show let out a screaming super distorted lead that grabbed the audience's attention. The keyboard player was virtually inaudible and the percussion player was not really into it (and not always in sync). Oftentimes the sax player would not refrain from blowing Coltrane-influenced riffs throughout some of the songs. That and the wild guitar leads obstructed the roots style.

The monitor screens located at all four corners of the club showing various angles of the stage performers were convenient because the place was packed. The improved Stone is much better than Wolfgangs in sound quality, configuration, space and video screen placement.

decode yourself

By Spliff Skankin' &
Jose "Hawkeye Joe" Scott

"Great," he thought. Ronald Shannon Jackson and the Decoding Society at a Sunday night gig up in 'Frisco, and he'd probably fall asleep, like he'd done at a couple of shows he'd been dying to see. This, combined with a metropolis-sized earache and pleading for the privilege of copping Mom's car . . .

"Relax," his crony assured, as was his nature to do so. Sure . . .

In the city, the usual gang of blue suits making sidewalk pinches, and painted street urchins of both sexes were adorning the boulevards. The borrowed car was parked in a brightly-lit spot seemingly devoid of glass shards A quick stroll around the avenue, and there they were, amid the rococo surroundings of the Great American Music Hall.

Ronald Shannon Jackson, having gigged with Ornette Coleman and Hames "Blood" Ulmer, was looking stylish. The band and its leader were nattily attired in matching white trousers. With a heavy ensemble of sax, bass, guitar and violin behind him, the leader/drummer radiated rhythms. The Decoding Society blended harmelodic lines, causing heads to swivel in attempts to discern the origins of each sound. Coltrane-ish reeds played off harshly distorted strings in a "fusion"-esque, albeit soothing manner. It was a defiant, yet cohesive, sound.

The two pals had seen many shows, but these musicians made the hardest hardcore thrasings sound like a slug farm. Jackson pummeled his skins in the manner of a gaggle of roofers sizing up a stack of wooden shingles; pressure-beat drum leads, as if to say, "I got all this gear in my kit – I'm gonna play it, OK?"

By contrast, the band leader was soft-spoken and courteous. It was the kid from the sticks in the big city . . . down-home blues goes to Gotham and finds itself in a bad side street. Indian-warpath percussion traded licks with the bassist who was plucking strings like flower petals. Akbar Ali on buzz-scratchin' fiddle smacked necks with phase-shifted guitar and both held their ground. Eric Person on alto, playing loud and smooth enough to rouse the ghost of Rashaan Roland Kirk. Stone groove, babies . . .

It was a well-timed set. The band jammed long hard and fast but didn't overstay its welcome. Although the two jazzsters sat less than ten feet from the amps, it wasn't piercing. Lack of vocals made the classically influenced tunes all the more pertinent.

"Auf Weidersehn," Ronald Shannon Jackson intoned. All listeners *were* decoded . . .

roots

By Johnny Rockit

Little Richard, Buddy Holly, Bo Diddley and Chuck Berry had more to do with the growth and evolution of Rock n' Roll than any other artists, including Elvis. Although Elvis was known as the King, he was not a writer of songs and was only as good as the songs his manager would put in front of his nose. Elvis was, along with his back-up musicians, the originator of the Rockabilly sound which was basically white southern boys trying to sound black, or country and blues thrown together to make up a crude but very exciting form of music called Rockabilly or Rock n' Roll. Elvis was a performer and singer of explosive power, but he was Colonel Parker's putty and allowed his music to drift from Rockabilly to cornball schmaltz and self-parody.

On the other hand, Buddy Holly's songs pointed to sounds that would dominate music. Buddy idolized Bo Diddley and Little Richard and borrowed much from their sound with songs like "Fade Away" (later done by the Rolling Stones) and his version of "Hey Bo Diddly." In listening to Buddy's version of "Rip it Up" it is clear that he was trying to capture Little Richard's crazed sound which also found itself in the early Beatles recordings. Little Richard claims that the Beatles were big fans of his and that he taught Paul how to do his scream. Paul admits this freely. Chuck Berry was Rock n' Roll's cheerleader for teenagers and their Rock n' Roll cares. When he wrote songs about the black experience, his songs went nowhere on the charts. Bo Diddley claims that Elvis stole his wiggle; it wouldn't be the first thing stolen from a black artist. Many of the black artists of the day got ripped off by the record companies and were forced to sign recording contracts for ridiculously low fees. They were prey for money grubbing, white, 1950s America. In exchange for the right to record their own songs people like Little Richard, Bo Diddley and Chuck Berry were forced to sell the rights to their songs. In contrast, Elvis made royalties off of songs he never wrote thanks to Colonel Parker. Pat Boone made more money singing "Tutti Frutti," "Lucille," and "Rip it Up" than Little Richard ever did. But through it all it was the black sounds that gave the real heart and soul to the beginnings of Rock n' Roll.

The least we can do is to thank the greats and recognize their contributions.

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waves

film views

"Mixed Blood"
–Bob Hershon

Gang movies from "Westside Story" to "Bad Bays" and "The Outsiders" have always seemed too cute. Everyone's hair is combed, there's always a love story and a redeeming moral. Warhol protege Paul Morrisey of "Flesh" and "Forty Deuce," Morissey who put enough blood in "Dracula" to make the most ardent vampire fan gag, who brought sex with king-sized Coke bottles to thirty-five millimeter, has changed all that. "Mixed Blood," which tied for first with "Paris, Texas" at the Miami Film Festival, is a nasty little number about drug warfare in New York's lower east side.

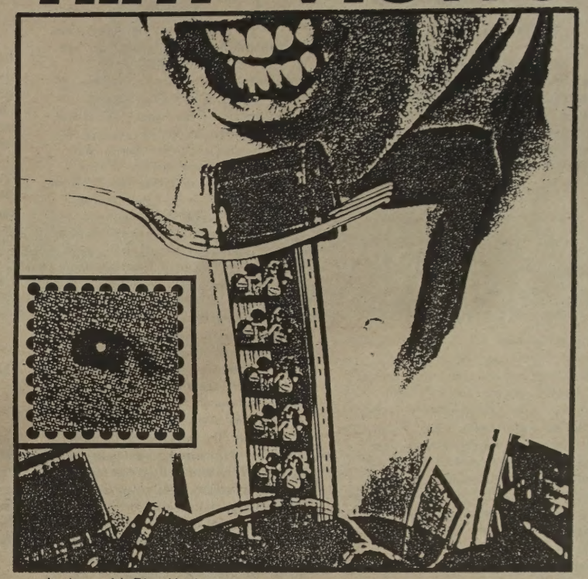
Set in Alphabet City ("A" street – "D" street) the worst of New York's slums, it details the story of a Brazilian family's attempt to fulfill their American dream through the sale of cocaine and heroin. The drug operation (run out of the human rat hole with runways that look like they have been gnawed out of concrete) and the gang, the Maceteros, are run by Rita La Punta, played by Marilia Pera of Pixote, the "Mother" of the "Boys." She uses boys in their early teens to run the drugs, guns and to do most of the killing; their youth is her protection against jail sentences, "interruptions" to her business.

Rita's arch-enemy drug-overlord, "The German," operates under the benevolent gaze of the vice-squad and controls gangs headed by such killers as Juan-the-Bullit and the Comanche, who are itching for the chance to do in Rita or one of her "soldiers."

Grim as it sounds, "Mixed Blood" is often hilarious. Rita La Punta's Carmen Miranda imitations, her emphasis on the family and insistence that her boys stay off drugs. The Maceteros live in hooker spends all her time servicing the "boys" and creating their day glo memorials as they start dropping like flies.

The action and atmosphere are heightened by an outstanding salsa score performed by Sugar Coated and Latin Greats' Wilfredo Vargas and Hector Lavoe.

Rita's main man, Iago (her only man over 18), the next Joe Deallesandro and the most compelling character in the movie along with Rita. He threatens to run off with Linda Kerridge, the "German's" beautiful airhead moll. The tension starts to build to a climax as Rita makes a secret deal with the German to eliminate the blonde and if he has to, her son. "There are plenty of other boys." What follows is the Marx Brothers bathed in blood. We are ready to yuk our way to the bitter end until Morrisey delivers a blow to the gut with his final scene that will stand alongside any serious cinema of recent record.



"Fast Forward"
–David L. Wyatt

The name Sidney Poitier has long been associated with brilliant talent, taste, class and fine entertainment. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that his latest effort as director of the hit dance musical film "Fast Forward" follows in that fine tradition. This Columbia Pictures film, which recently opened in movie houses across the country, is the moving, upbeat story of eight teenagers from Sandosky, Ohio who take off for New York City, hoping to get that one-in-a-million shot at stardom. Multi-talented Quincy Jones serves as the executive music producer and keeps the action moving full speed ahead with up tempo, inspiring tunes. Richard Wesley wrote the screenplay based on a story by Timothy March. Director Poitier sees "Fast Forward" as "a picture as much about self-sufficiency as it is about dance. It is a movie about young people who have taken hold of their lives and taken responsibility." I would say it is a film that everyone will enjoy and remember.

"Breaking Silence"
–Bob Hershon

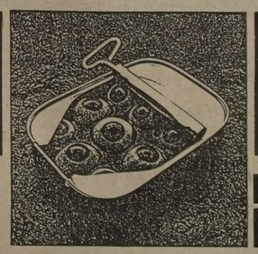
From time to time tragedies become hot topics. We've seen this happen with Vietnam, cancer and now child abuse. The suspiciously timely attention this generates in the media and the resulting flood of articles, TV news features and made-for-TV movies is often as short lived as a hit single.

The response to new films or articles soon becomes, "Oh no, not another one" or "I already know about that." Sometimes the best films (which are labored over for long periods of time) lack Hollywood's timing. Such is the case with "Breaking Silence," directed by Theresa Tollini.

The story is told through reminiscences of victims of child abuse. Even though they are fully grown, we still see them battling the demons of their childhood that the abuse generated. Their stories are punctuated by drawings of abused children. The pleas and deformities in their drawings points out the tragedies in their lives. One such drawing depicts a family without mouths, silence, the breaking of which is what this movie is about. Silence imposed by threat, shame or the belief that grown-ups are always right; the belief which keeps these children from crying out or having their pleas believed.

We see how abuse is passed on from generation to generation like some congenital disease, one which surfaces in the grandfather who abuses his son who abuses his daughter. Even while the film was being made the germ was passed on to another generation. So, we become witness to a process.

Eugene, a former victim in the film, says, "I'm not sure why some boys who are molested become offenders. I think it has to do with their need to deny they were abused, too." This film, which is now being shown to child abusers in prison, is also about families healing and children learning not to become victims. And like all good films, it is over too soon. "Breaking Silence" was screened in April at the Exploratorium as part of the San Francisco Film Festival. Plans are also in the works for a screening on the Public Broadcasting System.



mini reviews

–J.R. Ballard

NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR
A new version of the classic novel by George Orwell, about a futuristic computerized society in Great Britian. Performances by John Hurt and Richard Burton (his last screen role) are not good enough to save this outdated story.

THE GODS MUST BE CRAZY
Innovative and humorous look at the perplexities of modern society as seen through the eyes of a backwoods Botswana bushman. Characters are entertaining, and wildlife photography enchantingly presented in documentary style. Not to be missed.

WITNESS
A sensitive rendering of the cultural conflicts between an archaic Amish community and a righteous homicide investigator that evolves into a stylish romance and a clash of moral codes. Stars Harrison Ford and Kelly McGillis and is directed by Peter Weir. A real hallmark for Ford.

THE KILLING FIELDS
A true story based on a magazine article by Sydney Schanberg that tells of the struggles of the Cambodian refugees and the courage of Dith Pran, a guide/translator trapped in his own country's atrocities. Stars Sam Waterston and Haing S. Ngor. Compelling monument to human courage.

A SUNDAY IN THE COUNTRY
A French release by Bertrand Tavernier about an elderly painter during the turn of the century that is beautifully photographed with rich character portrayals. Stars Louis Decreux, and is one of the best foreign films of 1984.

AMADEUS
A finely tuned piece of movie-making that chronicles the life of Mozart, as seen through the envious eyes of a tormented court composer. Directed by Milos Forman, and stars F. Murray Abraham and Tom Hulce. As close to perfection as any film can achieve.

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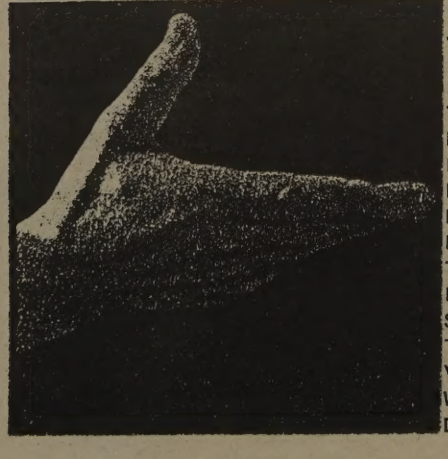

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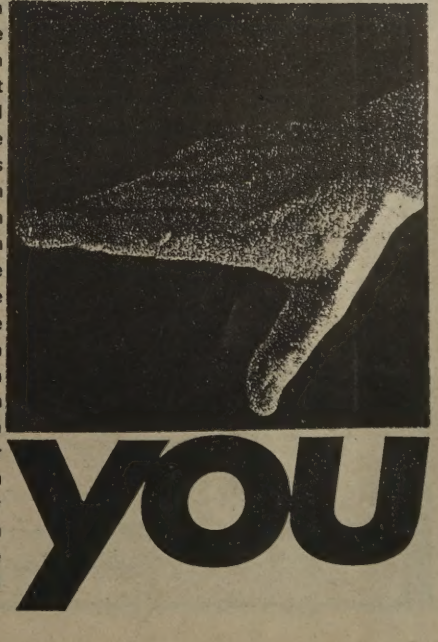

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